

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention provides a method, apparatus, and computer implemented instructions for performing the automatic discovery of the relationships between application programs and their associated data and configuration files. In the depicted example, the mechanism of the present invention includes a software program and software device driver mechanism that is installed on the computer system at the time the operating system is installed. These components may be installed at a later time, but the discovery of the relational meta data only begins when components of the present invention have been installed. The software program "hooks" or connects to the operating system at the single point where all file-oriented requests are handled. The single point of entry for various classes of operating system services is a standard feature of all currently available operating systems. When any executing program (application, service, etc.) makes a request to open, close, delete, rename, or move a file, the request is detected, and the name of the requesting program is identified. The file being operated on and the name of the program accessing the file is used to automatically create a relationship between the two. This relationship, file and program, is captured and represented in a relational meta data format. Additional meta data about the file creation can also be captured, such as the location of the file, time, date, or identity of the user. This relational meta data can be stored in another data file in the file system or saved in a database (i.e. registry, database, directory, etc.). The database can be protected and hidden from users to prevent the deletion or corruption of the data.

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